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THREE OLD BALLADS FROM MISSOURI

BY H. M. BELDEN

I. THE LONE WIDOW

THIS version of "The Wife of Usher's Well" (*Child*, No. 79) was sung by a woman who lived near West Plains, Missouri. It resembles the North Carolina version in *Child*, V, 294.

1. There was a lady neat,  
And children she had three;  
She sent them away to a far countrye  
To learn their grammarë.
2. They had n't been gone but a little while, —  
About three months, we'll say, —  
Till death was abroad all over the land  
And swept her babes away.
3. One winter night about Christmas time,  
The night was dark and cold,  
Her three little babes came running home  
Into their mother's room.
4. It was over the table she spread a cloth  
And on it bread and wine,  
Saying, "Rise ye up, you three little ones,  
And eat and drink of mine."
5. "I'll eat none of your bread, mother,  
I'll drink none of your wine,  
For yonder is our Saviour dear,  
And with him we will join.
6. "Cold clods lay over our heads, mother,  
Green grass grows over our feet;  
The tears you have shed, my mother dear,  
Would wet our winding sheet."

2. THE LOWLANDS LOW

This version of "The Sweet Trinity" (*Child*, No. 286) was written down by Owen Davidson, of the West Plains (Missouri) High School, as "learned from his father, who learned it from a hired man." It was sent to me by Miss G. M. Hamilton, teacher in the school.

1. "O captain, dear captain! what will you give to me  
If I sink that vessel called the Yellow Golden Tree,  
As she sails in the Lowlands low, low,  
As she sails in the Lowlands low?"
2. "One thousand pounds I'll give to you and my daughter to  
be your bride,  
If you'll sink that ship called the Yellow Golden Tree,  
As she sails," etc.
3. He took with him an auger well fitted for the use,  
And bored nine holes in the bottom of her sluice,  
As she sailed, etc.
4. "O captain, dear captain! come and take me up,  
For I have sunk that vessel called the Yellow Golden Tree,  
As she sailed," etc.
5. The captain wrapped him up in an old rawhide,  
And sunk him to the bottom with a fair wind and tide,  
As they sailed, etc.
6. Nine months later his ghost did appear,  
Which caused the wicked captain great dread and fear,  
As he sailed in the Lowlands low, low,  
As he sailed in the Lowlands low.

### 3. THE CAMBRIC SHIRT

This version of *Child*, No. 2, was contributed by Fred Wilkinson, West Plains, Missouri, from his grandmother's manuscript collection of ballads made in her youth at Brownington, Vermont. See *Child*, I, 19; V, 284.

1. "Can you make me a cambric shirt  
Fluma luma lokey sloomy —  
Without seam or fine needle work?  
From a teaslum tasalum templum  
Fluma luma lokey sloomy.
2. "Can you wash it in a well  
Where water never run nor water never fell?
3. "Can you dry it on a thorn  
That never was since Adam was born?"

4. "Can you buy me an acre of land  
Between the salt water and the sea land?
5. "Can you plow it with a hog's horn,  
And seed it all down with one pepper corn?
6. "Can you put it in a horn  
That never was seen since Adam was born?"
7. When the fool has done his work,  
He may come to me and have his shirt.